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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s

Report of the Second Committee (Part VI)*

Rapporteur: Mr. Basheer F. ZOUBI (Jordan)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 95, sub-items (a), (d) and (e) (see A/50/617, para. 3). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 38th and 43rd meetings, on 22 November and 12 December 1995. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/50/SR.38 and 43).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/50/L.31 and L.72

2. At the 38th meeting, on 22 November, the representative of the Philippines, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s" (A/C.2/50/L.31), which read:

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* The report of the Committee on this agenda item will be issued in several parts, under the symbol A/50/617 and addenda.

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 45/206 of 21 December 1990, in which it endorsed the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s 1/ and 49/98 of 19 December 1994, in which it decided to convene the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s,

"Reaffirming the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action, whose prime objective is to arrest the further deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries, to reactivate and accelerate growth and development in those countries and, in the process, to set them on the path of sustained economic growth and sustainable development,

"Expressing serious concern that the least developed countries as a group have not been able to achieve many of the objectives of the Programme of Action and that their overall socio-economic situation has continued to deteriorate,

"Noting with concern the reduced flow of development resources to the least developed countries, their heavy debt service burden and their continued marginalization in world trade,

"Taking note of agreed conclusions 423 (XLI) of 31 March 1995 of the Trade and Development Board 2/ on the annual review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s which was underpinned by The Least Developed Countries 1995 Report, 3/

"Taking note of the note by the Secretary-General 4/ on the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s,

"1. Reaffirms the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s as the basis for continuing cooperation between the least developed countries and their development partners, as well as its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action;

1/ Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

2/ A/50/15 (vol. I), chap. I, sect. B.

3/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.II.D.2.

4/ A/50/745.

"2. Endorses the measures and recommendations contained in the report of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s 5/ which are designed to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action over the second half of the decade;

"3. Calls upon all Governments, international and multilateral organizations, financial institutions and development funds, the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, and all other organizations concerned to take immediate, concrete and adequate steps to implement the Programme of Action, taking full account of the measures and recommendations of the mid-term global review so as to ensure the reactivation and acceleration of growth and development in the least developed countries and enable them to participate in and benefit from the process of globalization and liberalization;

"4. Welcomes the fundamental and far-reaching domestic reforms that are being implemented by the least developed countries, encourages those countries to continue such efforts and calls upon the international community to provide adequate support thereto;

"5. Strongly urges all donor countries to implement fully and expeditiously their commitments in all areas, including the agreed menu of aid targets and commitments as set out in the Programme of Action, as well as the measures agreed upon at the mid-term global review so as to provide a significant and substantial increase in the aggregate level of external support for the least developed countries, keeping in mind the increased needs of those countries as well as the requirements of the countries added to the list of the least developed countries following the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;

"6. Stresses the critical importance of multilateral assistance for the least developed countries, and calls for adequate replenishment of the International Development Association, the soft-term windows of the regional development banks and grant-based multilateral programmes;

"7. Calls for strengthened efforts with respect to the international debt strategy in favour of the least developed countries through the adoption of concrete measures to alleviate the debt burden, including action in the area of multilateral debt, and increased concessional financing, and encourages the Bretton Woods institutions to expedite their ongoing consideration of ways to address the issue of the multilateral debt of the least developed countries;

"8. Reiterates that increased opportunities for trade can help reactivate economic growth in the least developed countries, calls for significantly improved market access for their products and emphasizes the importance of concrete action to fully and expeditiously implement the

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5/ See A/50/745.

Marrakesh Declaration 6/ as it relates to the least developed countries, the ministerial decision on measures in favour of the least developed countries and the ministerial decision on measures concerning possible negative effects of the reform programmes on the least developed countries and net food-importing countries, as well as the measures agreed at the mid-term global review, with a view to enabling the least developed countries to maximize the benefits from the Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations 6/ and to cope with any adverse effects arising therefrom;

"9. Reaffirms the crucial importance of the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms for implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels;

"10. Recalls that in its resolution 49/98, it invited the Secretary-General to make recommendations to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, with a view to ensuring that the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had sufficient capacity to undertake an effective follow-up of the outcome of the mid-term global review and to follow up the conclusions and recommendations relating to the least developed countries adopted by major global conferences, and in this regard takes note of the proposals of the Secretary-General;

"11. Emphasizes the importance of the annual reviews by the Trade and Development Board of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the pressing need for enabling representatives of the least developed countries to participate in the annual reviews, and, to that end, requests the Secretary-General to include in his proposals referred to in paragraph 10 above necessary appropriations from the regular budget of the United Nations, beginning with that for the biennium 1996-1997, to cover the cost of participation of one representative of each least developed country in the annual reviews;

"12. Decides that a global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action will be carried out at a third United Nations conference on the least developed countries in the year 2000 and that the precise level, mandate, date and venue for such a review, as well as the preparatory process, should be determined by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, in the light of the consultations that take place under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;

"13. Calls upon the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its ninth session to take into account the outcome of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s;

6/ See Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994 (GATT secretariat publication, Sales No. GATT/1994-7).

"14. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At the 43rd meeting, on 12 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Conor Murphy (Ireland), introduced and orally corrected a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s" (A/C.2/50/L.72), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.31.

4. In accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General submitted a statement (A/C.2/50/L.77) of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.72.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.72, as orally corrected, without a vote (see para. 9).

6. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of Bangladesh and the United States of America (see A/C.2/50/SR.43).

7. In view of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.72, draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.31 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft decision

8. At its 43rd meeting, on 12 December, the Committee decided to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action (A/50/746) (see para. 10).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

9. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 45/206 of 21 December 1990, in which it endorsed the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s 7/ and 49/98 of 19 December 1994, in which it decided to convene the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting of the Mid-term Global

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7/ Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s,

Reaffirming the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action, the prime objective of which is to arrest the further deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries, to reactivate and accelerate growth and development in those countries and, in the process, to set them on the path of sustained economic growth and sustainable development,

Expressing serious concern that the least developed countries as a group have not been able to achieve many of the objectives of the Programme of Action and that their overall socio-economic situation has continued to deteriorate,

Noting with concern the reduced flow of development resources to the least developed countries, the resulting need to accord them priority in the allocation of concessional resources and their continued marginalization in world trade, as well as the fact that many least developed countries face serious debt problems and more than half are considered debt-distressed,

Taking note of agreed conclusions 423 (XLI) of 31 March 1995 of the Trade and Development Board 8/ on the annual review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, which was underpinned by The Least Developed Countries 1995 Report, 9/

Taking note of the note by the Secretary-General 10/ transmitting the report of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s,

1. Reaffirms the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s 7/ as the basis for continuing cooperation between the least developed countries, which have the responsibility for their own development, and their development partners, based on shared responsibility and strengthened partnership, as well as its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action;

2. Endorses the measures and recommendations contained in the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, as annexed

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8/ A/50/15 (vol. I), chap. I, sect. B.

9/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.II.D.2.

10/ A/50/745.

hereto, 11/ which are designed to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action over the second half of the decade;

3. Calls upon all Governments, international and multilateral organizations, financial institutions and development funds, the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, and all other organizations concerned to take immediate, concrete and adequate steps to implement the Programme of Action, taking full account of the measures and recommendations of the mid-term global review so as to ensure sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the least developed countries and to enable them to participate in and benefit from the process of globalization and liberalization;

4. Notes that many least developed countries, for their part, have been implementing courageous and far-reaching policy reforms and adjustment measures in line with the Programme of Action, and in that regard emphasizes the need for national policies and measures aimed at establishing macroeconomic stability by rationalizing public expenditure and adopting sound monetary and fiscal policies so as to ensure a dynamic private sector by such means as providing a sound legal framework and improving human resources development, living standards, health and the status of women, and calls upon the international community to provide adequate support thereto;

5. Strongly urges all donor countries to implement fully and expeditiously their commitments in all relevant areas, including the agreed menu of aid targets and commitments as set out in the Programme of Action and support to reinforce structural adjustment reform, as well as the measures agreed upon at the mid-term global review so as to provide a significant and substantial increase in the aggregate level of external support for the least developed countries, keeping in mind the increased needs of those countries as well as the requirements of the countries added to the list of the least developed countries following the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;

6. Stresses the critical importance of providing multilateral assistance for the least developed countries, in the form of grant-based multilateral programmes, and in that regard calls attention to the need to ensure adequate replenishment of the International Development Association and the soft-term windows of the regional development banks;

7. Emphasizes the serious debt problems of the least developed countries, which necessitate strengthened efforts to formulate an international debt strategy that should include concrete measures to alleviate the debt burden and increased concessional financing in support of appropriate economic policy measures, which will be critical to the revitalization of the growth and development of the least developed countries, and encourages the Bretton Woods institutions to expedite the ongoing consideration of ways to address the issue of multilateral debt, including those concerning the least developed countries;

11/ A/50/745, parts one to three, which will be annexed to the final text of the present draft resolution.

8. Reiterates that increased opportunities for trade can help reactivate economic growth in the least developed countries, calls for significantly improved market access for their products and emphasizes the importance of applying effectively the provisions of the Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, 12/ and further emphasizes in that context the importance of taking concrete action, as appropriate, to fully and expeditiously implement the Marrakesh Declaration 12/ as it relates to the least developed countries and the ministerial decision on measures in favour of the least developed countries, as well as the measures agreed to at the mid-term global review, with a view to enabling the least developed countries to maximize their benefit from the Final Act and to cope with any adverse effects arising therefrom;

9. Also reiterates the importance attached to the implementation of the ministerial decision on measures concerning possible negative effects of reform programmes on the least developed countries and net food-importing developing countries;

10. Reaffirms the importance of the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms for implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels as crucial to the implementation of the Programme of Action;

11. Recalls that in its resolution 49/98, it invited the Secretary-General to make recommendations to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, with a view to ensuring that the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had sufficient capacity to undertake an effective follow-up of the outcome of the mid-term global review and to follow up the conclusions and recommendations relating to the least developed countries adopted by major United Nations conferences, and in this regard takes note of the relevant proposals of the Secretary-General related to the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997;

12. Emphasizes the importance of the annual reviews by the Trade and Development Board of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the pressing need for enabling representatives of the least developed countries to participate in such annual reviews, and to that end requests the Secretary-General to defray the cost of participation of representatives of least developed countries by mobilizing extrabudgetary resources for that purpose and by reallocating existing resources of the regular budget, if required;

13. Recalls that at the end of the decade, a global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action will be carried out, in accordance with paragraph 140 of the Programme of Action and operative paragraph 7 (c) of General Assembly resolution 45/206 regarding the consideration by the Assembly at its fifty-second session of the holding of a third United Nations conference on the least developed countries;

12/ See Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994 (GATT secretariat publication, Sales No. GATT/1994-7).

14. Calls upon the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its ninth session to take into account the outcome of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

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10. The Second Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

The General Assembly decides to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. 13/

13/ A/50/746.